

## CAPTAIN LEATHERS.

THE STEAMBOATMAN'S WELCOME TO A NEW CRAFT IN THE RIVER.

A Charming Young Gentlewoman Who Commands One of the Biggest Steamboats That Plies on the Mississippi River.

(Correspondence of the Dispatch.)

MEMPHIS, TENN., February 23.—Among the steamers that travel up and down the Mississippi river is one that bears the name of an Indian tribe that long ago lived and loved on the banks of this mighty stream—the Natchez.

Recently, as this floating mansion moved slowly from its moorings at the port of New Orleans, its own signal of departure brought answering whistles from every boat, large and small, within the harbor.

The occasion of all this bedlam of noises was the steamboatman's welcome to a new craftsman in the profession. For the first time Captain Blanche Leathers was commanding the Natchez.

There, upon the main deck, stood a charming young woman guiding the destiny of the great white steamer, a lately-acquired master's license giving her the right to assume this, for a woman, novel position. Although two other women have entered the field, Captain Mary Miller and Captain French, who is also a pilot, neither of them have ever commanded a steamer of such proportions as the Natchez.

A RED-RIVER CAPTAIN. Captain Mary Miller, who died a short time ago, ran her small craft in what is known as the red-river trade, and was a steamboatman in the fullest sense of the word, an invalid husband and her son and daughters holding clerical positions under her. A large crayon portrait of Mrs. Miller has a place of honor on the walls of the New Orleans custom-house.

CAPTAIN FRENCH. Mrs. French is in command of a show-boat that travels through rivers and bayous, tying up here and there for a night's performance. Besides commanding this miniature theatre, she holds the wheel and makes the landing and unloading of the passengers. Captain French and Captain Leathers are now the only women who hold licenses to command on the great river.

If you were to board the Natchez and ask Captain Blanche Leathers, you

"and of the river," she said, "for I have been his partner for six years, making our first start in the Laura Lee, and afterwards making the boat her command, my husband suggested to me the idea of taking out a master's license, thus rendering it unnecessary, in his frequent business absences to burden ourselves with hiring a temporary master."

"Usually I have charge of the domestic affairs of the boat, shopping for it, mending for it, looking after the linen, and, in fact, seeing that the domestic employees live up to their duties, and that there is no unnecessary leakage in my department. This is an immense saving to the boat. Only in my husband's absence do I take entire charge, and this, while a responsibility, is not an onerous duty, for we have very efficient officers, all of them, notwithstanding a paragraph that has gone the round of the press, are men."

HER STEAMER HOME. Captain Blanche most emphatically declares that she is a perfectly happy woman; that her life is a full and busy one, free from all petty annoyances, and blessed with comfort and ease, which no one can doubt who has had the privilege of visiting the apartments on the Natchez that were specially designed for those two captains, who are partners for life, in the broadest sense of the word.

These apartments are enclosed high up in the main deck, and are spacious and most luxurious in finish and appointments. Broad, plate-glass windows (shaded when needed by pretty drapery) afford a wide view of the river and the city beyond. Pictures, books, piano, and dainty bits of needle-work scattered about, tell of the occupants' love for the life.

After viewing it all one can truly sym-

patize with the fair young southerner's declaration that here is the ideal life and that she would not change places with any one living.

"Truly does it seem that in these days everything is made to a woman of purpose, who dignifies any profession that she chooses to follow, for here is a cultured young woman more than ordinarily handsome, to the fairer sex, the daughter of a Louisiana planter (James S. Douglas, of Tensas Parish), reared in the privacy of an isolated home, educated under private tutors, entering a field that requires a thorough technical knowledge, executive ability, courage, concentration of purpose, and coolness in emergency, attributes that were deemed heretofore only possible to a strong man. More proud of the opportunity of earning laurels as a steamboat captain and her husband's helpmate, than of the social triumphs of a belle, she could so easily win in the charmed circle to which her birth and breeding entitle her."

KATHERINE NOBLES.

## BILLS INTRODUCED.

AMONG THEM ONE TO CREATE A NEW COUNTY OUT OF CLEVELAND.

Guaranty Companies Allowed to Make Bonds for State and Municipal Officers—President of the Senate in a Dying Condition.

RALEIGH, N. C., February 25.—(Special.)—The most important new bills introduced in the Legislature to-day were to create a new county out of part of Cleveland and other counties; to provide for maintenance of the penitentiary; to allow sale of timber-trees before partition; to incorporate the Norfolk and Camden railway; to better maintain the Bureau of school districts; to prevent the sale of adulterated meal and flour; to prevent the sale of adulterated kerosene.

Bills were passed incorporating the Carolina and Northern railway; to allow guaranty companies to make bonds for State, county, and municipal officers, and other persons, allowing half the cost of making bonds to be paid out of trust funds; to require corporations which loan money or checks to their cash in cash at option of holders. A bill was tabled to secure equal payments of debts of insolvents.

DYEING.

Senator Frank, President of the Senate, is dying of pneumonia at his boarding-house here. Another Senator, Ammons, is dangerously sick.

The insurance bill prepared by the Senate committee and based on several other bills, was acted on today, all of its sections, save two, being struck out. The sections, save two, being struck out, are an increase of the license-tax on life companies from \$100 to \$200; and, second, to forbid any compact by fire companies, or associations, to control insurance rates. The report of the committee was unanimously against the creation of the office of insurance commissioner. It is favorable for the first, but it is unfavorable on the second section as above.

TO ADJOURN.

The Fusion members of the Legislature had a caucus to-night on the question of disposing of several bills and to close up legislation. Fusionists say a great effort will be made to adjourn March 12th.

This was the forty-first day of the legislative session. It is amazing how little has been as yet done. The work of erecting the great building at the Confederate monument and the west gate of the Capitol Square began. It is required to place the shaft in its place. It will require at least another month to complete the monument. A fully a month has been lost by reason of bad weather.

The Fusionists had a meeting this evening to devise some plan to close up the session. The meeting was held in the parlors of the penitentiary. It is something which they specially desire.

PAINFUL INJURIES.

Yesterday while a little son of Senator Moody was playing with some boys in the Capitol and sliding down banisters he lost his hold and fell some fifteen feet to the granite floor. His head was injured, an arm broken, and a finger cut open. His condition is serious. He fell on one elbow and forehead.

There was another severe accident, and a curious one, here yesterday, in which Mr. George Moore, a son of the late Hon. U. F. Moore, suffered what may be a life injury. Mr. Moore was at a grand military exhibition. The young men who composed the class did their part well, and by their splendid work reflected great credit upon their school. Mr. Moore, however, had been training them all the session.

The following young gentlemen composed the class: Messrs. Bull, Campbell, Pence, Shelton, Caldwell, Ficklin, Douglas, Rudd, Lineaver, Williams, Fleming, Lewis, and Hudson. Professor King has every reason to be proud of his excellent class, and the audience are greatly indebted to them for the enjoyable entertainment they were given.

REV. PAUL WHITEHEAD PREACHED.

A sermon needed by the times in Plain, Strong, Effective Language.

BEAVER DAM DEPOT, Va., Feb. 25.—(Special.)—Yesterday the presiding elder of this district preached in the afternoon at this place. He was the first time I ever saw or heard the Rev. Paul Whitehead.

His sermon was just what the times needed, and it was most effective. The power of the Gospel in plain, strong, and effective language. No one who listened to him could have failed to understand the need of a more earnest and more effective faith. He was most effective in his language, and his audience were greatly indebted to him for the enjoyable entertainment they were given.

AFTERNOON GYMNASIUM EXHIBIT.

In the afternoon of the same day at 3 o'clock, Professor W. J. King and his class gave the residents of the city a most enjoyable and instructive exhibition. The young men who composed the class did their part well, and by their splendid work reflected great credit upon their school. Mr. Moore, however, had been training them all the session.

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THE TAX RATE.

The chairman of the finance committee of the Legislature tells me that they recommend a two-cent rate on the tax rate; this being the same as that fixed by the last Legislature.

It is an open secret now that the Populists do not feel nearly so much interest in the repeal of the county government law as they did before they lost hope of being able to push through their "cumulative voting."

W. H. Martin, for years chief clerk of the revenue collector's office here, will in a few weeks become a clerk in the State Treasury, succeeding Robert H. Burkhead, who goes to Norfolk to engage in business.

RAILWAY CONSTRUCTION.

There are a few signs of railway construction in the city. The importance in two years or more. Three new railway charters have been granted thus far by this Legislature.

In the house to-day the resolution to reduce salaries and fees was unfavorably reported. At one time there was quite a flourish in regard to it.

DEATH OF A BURNED CHILD.

Mr. Benjamin Gammon, Foundryman, died yesterday.

SCOTLAND NECK, N. C., February 25.—(Special.)—The little child of Mr. J. S. Coleman, who was burned so badly about two weeks ago, as reported in this correspondence, died yesterday.

Mr. Benjamin Gammon, aged about 70 years, keeps a mill a few miles from town. He was a very old man, and had been a member of the church for many years. He was a very good man, and was much respected in the community.

They kept it up all night, but did not find him until daylight. He had fallen down on the snow, and was unable to get up. He was a very old man, and had been a member of the church for many years. He was a very good man, and was much respected in the community.

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It is very evident that no detective agency or other similarly employed by the collector should be spared by the state a reward, and a larger one should certainly be offered, and the State officials increase theirs from a paltry \$500 reward to at least \$2,000. A trial had in the wrecked bank, through the Virginia Military Institute and County Treasurer, a sum aggregating \$2,000. No other money was offered by the collector, for our county officials are helpless in the matter. This is the sentiment voiced by the people of Rockbridge county and voiced openly.

MRS. CLIFTON ROBERTSON DEAD.

Witnesses Being Summoned in the Fleming Trial—Snow and Cold.

CLINTWOOD, VA., February 25.—(Special.)—Your correspondent has just learned that Mrs. Clifton Robertson, of the upper end of this county, died a day or two since, after a lingering illness of several months. Mrs. Robertson was comparatively a young woman, being only a little past 30 years of age.

Quite a number of witnesses are being summoned from this county in the trial of the Fleming family. The trial is set for next week. Both the prosecution and defence have witnesses from this county. The trial is set for next week. Both the prosecution and defence have witnesses from this county.

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The condition of the corps was not improved in this direction. If he is not granted further leave of absence his fellow soldiers of the 10th Cavalry will be disappointed. It is hoped that his recall will be revoked and that he may be allowed to remain to the end of the present season.

Suicide of Mr. T. F. Williams.

The community of Burgess's Store, Northumberland county, was thrown in a state of alarm and excitement on Monday evening last, caused by the suicide of Mr. Thomas F. Williams, first assistant keeper of Smith's Point light-house, and a highly respected citizen of the community, who shot himself with a pistol in the left breast and right temple. Mr. Williams committed the fatal act about 7 o'clock, while alone in the house. His wife and child being in the yard at the time. When the first shot was fired Mrs. Williams and her little child thought some one had broken in for the house, and when the second shot was heard she was confident that it was in the house. As she entered the door she was shocked to find her husband lying prostrate on a lounge, with a 32-calibre pistol by his side and blood pouring from the two self-inflicted wounds. He died in a few minutes. Mr. Williams had been in bad health for some time.

Intermediate Celebrations.

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The Washington and Lee Literary Society held its intermediate celebration in the university chapel in the evening of Washington's natal day, and Mr. E. A. Quarles, of Virginia, was awarded the declaimer's medal, and Mr. C. A. MacHitt, Jr., of Virginia, the medal for the best debate.

A Fatal Shooting Affray.

IRONGATE, VA., February 25.—(Special.)—Saturday night at a negro dance in the western part of this town a general row took place between two parties, who were shot by Anthony Bell and several others. As yet no arrests have been made. A few minutes ago the body of the death of Dr. R. G. Bradley, at Glen Wilton.

Relief of Unemployed.

LONDON, February 25.—James Kier Hardie, M. P., had another hearing to-day before the House of Commons Committee which is considering plans for the relief of the unemployed. He admitted that the distress was so widespread that a state grant of \$500,000 would only tide over the needs of unemployed throughout the country for six weeks.

Mr. John Burns asked if state grants would have the effect of debasing the value of the pound for a generation to come. Mr. Hardie replied: "No, if there is any debasement of the pound, it is being done under the influence of charity relief funds."

Funeral of Mr. G. A. Bush.

BEDFORD CITY, February 25.—(Special.)—On Sunday afternoon the funeral services of Mr. Griffin A. Bush took place here. The funeral was held in the presence of a crowded church. Rev. Dr. Christian, the pastor of the church, assisted by Rev. Dr. Murray, of the Presbyterian church, and Rev. Mr. Royall, of the Baptist church, performed the services.

Mr. Bush was a native of Bedford county, had resided in the town for a number of years, where he conducted a livery stable. He was a very large man, the picture of health, until several weeks ago, when he contracted his hand with a piece of wire, which caused some irritation at first, and finally developed into erysipelas. He suffered intensely for about ten days. He was about 55 years of age. He was a member of the Knights of Honor, which organization attended the funeral in a body.

The audience that attended the entertainment of Polk Miller on Saturday night was one of the largest that ever assembled in the Opera-House, and a more sympathetic and appreciative one he must have rarely ever had. After the programme was over repeated cheers and accolades would induce him to give just a more song or recitation. The entertainment throughout was one of the most delightful that has ever been here, and he must be heard to be truly appreciated in his unvarnished delineation of the negro, as he was in the old times "fore de war."

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NO. 207 EAST BROAD STREET.

POSITIVE SALE